NUMB. CCIII.

The SPECTATOR.

—Phæbe pater, si das hujus mihi nominis usum,
Nec falsâ Clymene culpam sub imagine celat;
Pignora da, Genitor——— Ov. Met.

Tuesday, October 23. 1711.

THERE is a loose Tribe of Men whom I have not yet taken Notice of, that ramble into all the Corners of this great City, in order to seduce such unfortunate Females as fall into their Walks. These abandoned Profligates raise up Issue in every Quarter of the Town, and very often for a valuable Consideration [illegible] it upon the Church-warden. By this means [illegible] are several Married Men who have a little Family in most of the Parishes of *London* and *Westminster*, and several Batchelors who are undone by a [illegible] of Children.

[illegible] a Man once gives himself this Liberty of [illegible] at large, and living upon the Common, he [illegible] so much Game in a populous City, that it is [illegible]ising to consider the Numbers which he some[illegible] Propagates. We see many a young Fellow, who is scarce of Age, that could lay his Claim to the *Jus trium Liberorum*, or the Privileges that were granted by the *Roman* Laws to all such as were Fathers of three Children: Nay, I have heard a Rake that was not quite Five and Twenty declare himself the Father of a Seventh Son, and very prudently determine to breed him up a Physician. In short, the Town is full of these young Patriarchs, not to mention several battered Beaus, who, like heedless Spendthrifts that squander away their Estates before they are Masters of them, have raised up their whole Stock of Children before Marriage.

I must not here omit the particular Whim of an Impudent Libertine that had a little smattering of Heraldry, and observing how the Genealogies of great Families were often drawn up in the shape of Trees, had taken a Fancy to dispose of his own Illegitimate Issue in a Figure of the same kind.

—Nec longum tempus et ingens,
Exiit ad cœlum ramis felicibus arbos,
Miraturque novas frondes, et non sua poma.
Virg.

The Trunk of the Tree was marked with his own Name, *Will. Maple*. Out of the Side of it grew a large Barren Branch, Inscribed *Mary Maple*, the Name of his unhappy Wife. The Head was adorned with five huge Boughs. On the bottom of the first was Written in Capital Characters *Kate Cole*, who branched out into three Sprigs, *viz. William*, *Richard* and *Rebecca*. *Sal Twiford* gave birth to another Bough that shot up into *Sarah*, *Tom. Will.* and *Frank*. The third Arm of the Tree had only a single Infant in it, with a space left for a second, the Parent from whom it sprung being near her time, when the Author took this Ingenious Device into his Head. The two other great Boughs were very plentifully loaden with Fruit of the same kind; besides which there were many Ornamental Branches that did not bear. In short, a more flourishing Tree never came out of the Herald's Office.

What makes this Generation of Vermin so very Prolifick, is the indefatigable Diligence with which they apply themselves to their Business. A Man does not undergo more watchings and fatigues in a Campaign, than in the Course of a vicious Amour. As it is said of some Men, that they make their Business their Pleasure, these Sons of Darkness may be said to make their Pleasure their Business. They might conquer their corrupt Inclinations with half the Pains they are at in gratifying them.

Nor is the Invention of these Men less to be admired than their Industry and Vigilance. There is a Fragment of *Apollodorus* the Comick Poet (who was Contemporary with *Menander*) which is full of Humour as follows. *Thou may'st shut up thy Doors*, says he, *with Bars and Bolts: It will be impossible for the Blacksmith to make them so fast, but a Cat and a Whore-master will find a way through them.* In a Word, there is no Head so full of Stratagems as that of a Libidinous Man.

Were I to propose a Punishment for this infamous Race of Propagators, it should be to send them, after the second or third Offence, into our *American* Colonies, in order to People those Parts of her Majesty's Dominions where there is a want of Inhabitants, and in the Phrase of *Diogenes* to *Plant Men*. Some Countries punish this Crime with Death; but I think such a Banishment would be sufficient, and might turn this generative Faculty to the Advantage of the Publick.

In the mean time, till these Gentlemen may be thus disposed of, I would earnestly exhort them to take Care of those unfortunate Creatures whom they have brought into the World by these indirect Methods, and to give their spurious Children such an Education as may render them more virtuous than their Parents. This is the best Attonement they can make for their own Crimes, and indeed the only Method that is left them to repair their past Miscarriages.

I would likewise desire them to consider, whether they are not bound in common Humanity, as well

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as by all the Obligations of Religion and Nature, to make some Provision for those whom they have not only given Life to, but entailed upon them Shame and Infamy. And here I cannot but take notice of those depraved Notions which prevail among us, and which must have taken Rise our natural Inclination to favour a Vice to which we are so very prone, namely, that *Bastardy* and *Cuckoldom* should be looked upon as Reproaches, and that the Shame which is only due to Lewdness and Falsehood, should fall in so unreasonable a manner upon the Persons who suffer and are Innocent.

I have been insensibly drawn into this Discourse by the following Letter, which is drawn up with such a Spirit of Sincerity, that I question not but the Writer of it has represented his Case in a true and genuine Light.

SIR,

'I Am one of those People who by the general 'Opinion of the World are counted both Infa-'mous and Unhappy.

'My Father is a very eminent Man in this King-'dom, and one who bears considerable Offices in 'it. I am his Son. but my Misfortune is, that I 'dare not call him Father, nor he without shame 'own me as his Issue, I being Illegitimate, and 'therefore deprived of that endearing Tenderness 'and unparallel'd Satisfaction which a good Man 'finds in the Love and Conversation of a Parent; 'Neither have I the Opportunities to render him 'the Duties of a Son, he having always carried 'himself at so vast a Distance, and with such Su-'periority towards me, that by long use I have con-'tracted a Timorousness when before him, which 'hinders me from declaring my own Necessities, 'and giving him to understand the Inconveniences 'I undergo.

'It is my Misfortune to have been neither bred 'a Scholar, nor to Business, which renders me en-'tirely uncapable of making Provision for my self 'without his Assistance; and this creates a continual 'Uneasiness in my Mind, fearing I shall in time 'want Bread; my Father, if I may so call him, giving 'me but very faint Assurances of doing any thing 'for me.

'I have hitherto lived somewhat like a Gentle-'man, and it would be very hard for me to labour 'for my Living. I am in continual Anxiety for 'my future Fortune, and under a great Unhappiness 'in losing the sweet Conversation and Friendly 'Advice of my Parents; so that I cannot look up-'on my self otherwise than as a Monster strangely 'sprung up in Nature, which every one is ashamed 'to own.

'I am thought to be a Man of some natural 'Parts, and by the continual reading what you have 'offered the World, become an Admirer thereof, 'which has drawn me to make this Confession; at 'the same time hoping, if any thing herein shall 'touch you with a Sense of Pity, you would then 'allow me the favour of your Opinion thereupon, 'as also what part, I being unlawfully born, may 'claim of the Man's Affection who begot me, and 'how far in your Opinion I am to be thought his 'Son, or he acknowledged as my Father. Your 'Sentiments and Advice herein will be a great Con-'solation and Satisfaction to,

SIR,

Your Admirer and

Humble Servant,

W. R.

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AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane this present Tuesday, being the 23d of October, will be presented a Comedy called The Careless Husband. The Part of Lord Foppington by Mr Cibber, Lord Morelove by Mr. Mills, Sir Charles Easy by Mr. Wilks, Lady Betty Modish by Mrs. Oldfield. Lady Graveairs by Mrs. Rogers, Lady Easy by Mrs. Knight, Edgin by Mrs. Bicknell. To which will be added a Farce of one Act only, called The Country Wake. the Part of Hob by Mr. Doggett.

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